

# BULLETIN OF ANARCHIST RESEARCH

September 1989  
Number 18

## ANARCHIST RESEARCH GROUP

We had the usual attendance (low teens) at our last meeting on 8 July. David Goodway gave the talk on Herbert Read and Alex Comfort. For those of you who missed the talk, it would appear that another version will be delivered at the History Workshop (see elsewhere in this issue for details).

David began with a review of notions about what "an intellectual" was, outlining reasons why intellectuals might not be attracted to anarchism. Neither Read nor Comfort actually needed the anarchist movement to promote themselves. David went into some detail about the details of their personal history. At this point he also described their relationship to the anarchist movement itself, ending with a short discussion of Read's rather controversial acceptance of the knighthood. The discussion focussed not only on general questions about the role of intellectuals (reasonably pertinent in our group), but also on the details of their lives.

The next meeting of ARG will be on 7 October, when Brian Morris will deliver a paper on "Anarchism and the French Revolution". The meeting will be at the usual venue. This room can be found by going to the tall white building on Malet St. (Senate House, University of London) and asking the porter in the Institute for Historical Research for directions to the meeting of the Anarchist Research Group. We begin at 2.00 and must leave by 5.00, at which time we retire to a nearby cafe for an hour or so of informal chatting. The dates for the following ARG meetings have not yet been scheduled, but following usual practices, the next meeting will be on one of the first Saturdays in January (the 6th or 13th). More details will reach you soon.

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## BOOK REVIEWERS WANTED

From now on, all correspondence regarding book reviews should go to John Moore, Reviews Editor, Bulletin of Anarchist Research, P.O. Box 556, London SE5 0RL. The following books are available and can be obtained by writing as rapidly as possible saying why you are just the person who should get the prize.

Caute, D., *Sixty-Eight: The Year of the Barricades*, Hamish Hamilton, 1988, 464pp. While not anarchist, and not really very good, the topic still echoes in anarchist thinking and could deserve a review.

Young, J.D. *Socialism since 1889*, Pinter, London, 1988. An analytical study of the history of modern socialism to the present. Biographical studies of 18 socialists, illuminating particular problems. Last chapter explores post-war crisis.

De Ligt, B., *The Conquest of Violence*, Pluto, London, 1989. First published in English in 1937, soon became classic of non-violence. De Ligt is Dutch, activist and scholar. proposes strategy inspired by but critical of Gandhi.

As many of you are aware, many of the reviews are unsolicited. In general, the idea is to review books that you wish to recommend to others, for whatever reasons. If you wish to get a review copy of a book, please write to John about the matter so he can keep track of it all.

## HISTORY WORKSHOP 23

This year's History Workshop will be held at Salford University. Once again our own David Goodway has organised an "anarchist strand". The exact programme is as follows:

Sharif Gemie - *Charles Fourier and the Politics of Harmony*  
Rene Berthier - *Can Anything New be said about the Bakunin-Marx Opposition? A Methodological Approach*  
Colin Ward - *Unexpected Relevance of the Anarchists*  
David Goodway - *The Anarchism of Alex Comfort*  
Tony Powell - *Rallying 'Round a Fading Flag: Responses of the British Anarchists to the Spanish Civil War*  
Caroline Cahm - *Peter Kropotkin: Revolutionary Action Past and Present*

The registration fees are £12.00 for Funded Individuals, £7.00 for Unfunded Individuals, and £1.00 for Unwaged Individuals. All registrations to and further information from Helen Bowyer, Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX tel. (061) 736 3601. Although I have been to all the other HW since the anarchist strand began, I will be unable to attend this one. So any of you who counted on seeing me there for some reason or other should use more remote methods of communication.

Send all correspondence about editorial matters, articles for publication and all money for subscriptions to T.V. Cahill, Department of Politics, University of Lancaster, Lancaster LA1 4YL, England. Correspondence about book reviews or related matters should be directed to John Moore, Reviews Editor-Bulletin of Anarchist Research, P.O. Box 556, London SE5 0RL, London, England. Subscriptions cost £4.00 for six issues or £3.00 if you are exceedingly poor. Foreign subscriptions cost £8.00 (by air to anywhere). Make cheques or money orders payable to BULLETIN OF ANARCHIST RESEARCH (although cheques payable to T.V. Cahill can be used). CHEQUES MUST BE IN STERLING, as the banks take a massive cut. It is better to pay in dollars cash than to send a me a dollar cheque!

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# **IDEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY** An Independent Journal of Systematic Ideology

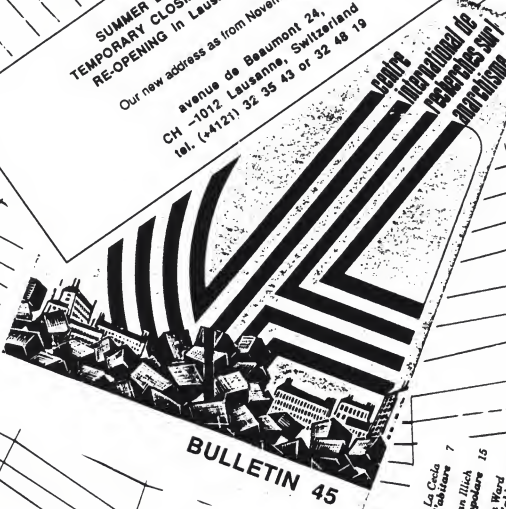
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SUMMER BREAK - August 1989  
TEMPORARY CLOSING - November 1, 1989 -  
RE-OPENING in Lausanne, early 1990 -  
Our new address as from November 1, 1989:  
Avenue de Beaumont 24,  
CH -1012 Lausanne, Switzerland  
tel. (+4121) 32 35 43 or 32 48 19



**SUBVERSION**  
DISCUSSION PAPER No.2

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Also: Reports on the abortion rights march in D.C. and the Polish opposition

# **ANARCHY** a Journal of DISARM AUTHORITY! ARM YOUR DESIRES! May-July 1989

Special issue on children's sexuality!  
"Save the children" by Richard Walters  
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**VOLONTA'**  
1-2/89

## EDITORIAL

There are a couple of things I have failed to do over the last few months, and I would like to find a method of delegating them to someone else. It is unlikely that I will actually get round to them in the near future. The first is the actual organising of a weekend (or longer?) gathering for the Anarchist Research Group. I have a file of possible sites. Should anyone wish to take on this task which would involve organising the venue and the papers/seminars or meetings, I would happily delegate it. I will also be delighted to post any documents free. At the last two ARG meetings, there was a good deal of support for a gathering of some sort, both for the social and scholarly benefits. As it is a compact and discrete event, it seems just the sort of thing to delegate. Anyone out there interested?

I have succeeded in delegating the job of "book review editor" to John Moore. See the announcement in the section on book reviews in its more or less usual place.

In a more general sense, I will probably be resigning as the editor of BAR at the end of 1990. During 1991 and 1992, it is extremely likely that I shall be travelling a good deal and will not be able to keep up with the work...even to the not entirely perfect standard that I have managed (this issue, for example, is about a month later than I planned). So please think about who might make a good successor. The editor should have frequent and unrestricted access to a cheap photocopier for "printing" BAR (the number we print makes offset a bit expensive, Universities often have a print service that does such things cheaply), a word processor (and a 24 pin printer at least) and a safe and secure mailing address. I will (I hope) be able to pass on the list of loyal subscribers, a healthy bank balance, useful software and some tips I have picked up over the years. I think I can guarantee that my successor will not become bored or frustrated with the job. The daily post is dead interesting and there are perks. I shall continue to do one or two discreet bits of the job, and John Moore has taken over book reviews. The pay is non-existent, of course. My best guess is that each issue takes four working days to produce (although it probably takes longer when all the bits and pieces are counted, and less if the editor is actually skilled) and the post takes about 3-4 hours a week to answer. Two people who live in the same neighbourhood could "job-share". If anyone fancies the job, drop me a note and we will have a chat. The formal selection of a new editor will no doubt be a matter for "decision" at one of our quarterly ARG meetings.

On a happier note BAR seems to have at last moved into being known and accepted as a legitimate outlet for writing and information. Obviously not everyone manages to write something, but the articles and reviews are getting longer and better. BAR has been going long enough that we are now on a number of lists of libertarian publications and receive unsolicited information quite regularly. As the editor, I should like to thank all of you for the work you have done. And, wait for it, urge you to do more!

Someone has suggested that I have a Table of Contents for BAR. I shall attempt to incorporate this feature. Another person suggested that it would be good to have an index of all the articles and reviews. Yet another job for a keen indexer (indexist?) out there. Should you be interested, drop me line or two and you will be selected.



## CHAOS: A REVIEW

Hakim Bey, *Chaos: Broadsheets of Ontological Anarchism* (Providence, RI: Grim Reaper Books, 1985) pp. 46.

Hakim Bey can be identified as a New Ranter -- a term which loosely links together a disparate group of anarchically-oriented contemporary Americans who assail the control complex with an explosive blend of witty, erudite, subversive and erotic rhetoric. A characteristic of this current -- which includes Bob Black and a number of less notorious figures -- remains a commitment to *camizdat* and street dissemination formats such as flyers and posters. And Bey's work is representative in this sense also. *Chaos*, as its subtitle indicates, comprises a collection of pieces originally distributed as broadsheets.

Bey's interests are wide-ranging, eclectic and controversial -- encompassing, for example, anarchism, Islamic heresies and pederasty. An enumeration of the titles of the pieces assembled in this volume might provide some idea of the breadth of its author's concerns. Aside from an "Advertisement" which outlines something of Bey's intentions, the text contains essays entitled "Chaos", "Poetic Terrorism", "Amour Fou", "Wild Children", "Paganism", "Art Sabotage", "The Assassins", "Pyrotechnics", "Chaos Myths", "Pornography", "Crime" and "Sorcery". All of these pieces are composed in a poetic style -- a form of prose poetry designed as an antidote to the anaesthetic effects of orthodox intellectual modes of discourse: "What this tells you is not prose. It may be pinned to the board but it's still alive and wriggling." Bey remains sensitive to the snares set by the liberal-minded to entrap visionary perceptions, and guards against these by insisting upon the refractory nature of his writings and by building a series of escape routes into his discourse: "This book distances itself by a certain impassability of surface, almost a glassiness. It doesn't wag its tail & it doesn't snarl but it bites & humps the furniture .... It sets up a network of cut-outs & safe drops between itself & its readers." These writings do not possess a didactic purpose. Rather than invite rational engagement, they attempt to elude it at every juncture.

How, then, should one endeavour to interpret this text? Perhaps the most convenient method of approach is to focus on four interrelated issues which forcefully emerge in Bey's writings and define the parameters of his world view. This thematic quartet can be characterized by the following headings: an ontology of chaos; conceptions of cultural resistance; personal revolutionary praxis; and magic.

At the basis of Bey's world view lies a belief in the ontological status of chaos. Anarchy constitutes the primal metaphysical condition: "Chaos came before all principles of order & entropy." But in addition to preceding control, it remains everlasting and "never died". Analogous to many Eastern Philosophies, the dominance of order is regarded *maya* or illusion which obscures the underlying truth of anarchy. Hence, "There is no becoming, no revolution, no struggle, no path; already you're the monarch of your own skin -- your inviolable freedom waits to be completed only by the love of other monarchs: a politics of dream, urgent as the blueness of sky." In short, the process of total transformation commences with changes in consciousness -- particularly with shifts into non-ordinary modes of perception -- and continues with the discovery of congenial companions through a visionary politics.

Such individuals experience lives of exquisite intensity. Becoming "agents of chaos" who "love and desire to the point of terror", they assume subversive roles: "Avatars of chaos act as spies, saboteurs, criminals of amour fou, neither selfless nor selfish, accessible as children, mannered as barbarians, chafed with obsessions, unemployed, sensually deranged, wolfangels, mirrors for contemplation, eyes like flowers, pirates of all signs and meanings." They achieve a freshness and clarity of vision currently available only to children, those "natural ontological anarchists, angels of chaos" whose group structure provides "the natural social model for ontological anarchism."

Children and authentic rebels have much in common: "The only



ones who actually wish to share the mischievous destiny of those savage runaways or minor guerrillas rather than dictate it, the only ones who can understand the cherishing & unleashing are the same act - these are mostly artists, anarchists, pervers, heretics, a band apart (as much from each other as from the world) or able to meet only as wild children might, locking gazes across a dinner table while adults gibber from behind their masks." Such people share a common sensibility: "To embrace disorder both as wellspring of style & voluptuous storehouse, a fundamental of our alien & occult civilization, our conspiratorial aesthetic, our lunatic espionage - this is the action (let's face it) either of an artist of some sort, or of a ten or thirteen-year-old." But more importantly: "We share the same enemies & our means of triumphant escape are also the same: a delirious & obsessive play, powered by the spectral brilliance of the wolves & their children."

Replacing work and coercion with the freedom of play emerges as a crucial revolutionary act: "Unbridled PLAY: at one & the same time the source of our Art & of all the race's rarest eros." Art and libido are linked because for Bey all play remains thoroughly suffused with eroticism: "After Chaos comes Eros - the principle of order implicit in the nothingness of the unqualified One. Love is structure, system the only code untainted by slavery & drugged sleep. We must become crooks & con-men to protect its spiritual beauty in a besel of clandestinity, a hidden garden of espionage." In contrast to the artificial order of control, forcibly imposed on the variegation of chaos, Bey posits love as an innate spiritual/sexual dispensation - "a spontaneous organic order" - which naturally emerges out of anarchy. This dispensation remains latent within people subjugated by the control complex, but is subject to constant threats of extermination. Love should be nurtured and protected within the system's interstices, but in turn it should energize a radical movement for total transformation. Defensive actions should become offensive - although maintaining its covert status. After reviewing some non-occidental cosmologies, which mythologically relate how chaos was enslaved and ordered by control forces, Bey concludes: "Ontological Anarchism tends to disagree only with the Taoists' total quietism. In our world Chaos has been overthrown by younger gods, moralists, phalocrats, banker-priests, fit lords for serfs. If rebellion proves impossible then at least a kind of clandestine spiritual jihad might be launched. Let it follow the war-banners of the anarchist black dragon, Tiamat, Hun Tun."

Bey proposes several weapons for use in this holy war. The basic tool remains sorcery, a practice which is defined in a very similar manner to the way in which Starhawk defines magic: "Sorcery: the systematic cultivation of enhanced consciousness or non-ordinary awareness & its deployment in the world of deeds & objects to bring about desired results." Practitioners of sorcery are socially defined as outlaws because they operate in accord with nature: "Sorcery breaks no law of nature because there is no Natural Law, only the spontaneity of *natura naturans*, the tao. Sorcery violates laws which seek to chain this flow - priests, kings, hierophants, mystics, scientists & shopkeepers all brand the sorcerer enemy for threatening the power of their charade, the tensile strength of their illusory web." Bey thus becomes a proponent of criminality, although he is at pains to stress that "The crimes advocated in these broadsheets cannot be committed against self or other but only against the mordant crystallization of ideas into structures of poisonous Thrones & Dominations." In fact the major "criminal act" proposed here is the practice of amour fou - a revitalized version of the surrealist notion: "Amour fou involves non-ordinary sexuality the way

sorcery demands non-ordinary consciousness .... AF is always illegal, whether it's disguised as a marriage or a boyscout troop ... It is not the derangement of the senses but rather their apotheosis - not the result of freedom but rather its precondition."

Having said this, however, it should be noted that Bey's chief interventions occur in the realm of culture. These interventions have a positive aspect, designated by the term poetic terrorism, and a negative aspect termed art-sabotage (an "aesthetic jihad" against "offensive art" and those "institutions which use art to diminish consciousness & profit by delusion"). Neither element - except the former in its most developed form - proceeds far beyond the stale shock tactics of the Dadaists and their imitators. Poetic terrorism aims to induce an "aesthetic-shock" and thus impel its audience/victims to "seek out some more intense mode of existence": "If it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist) it fails." But for Bey the most affirmative form of poetic terrorism is pornography - a term which he defines in a specific sense. Pornography is prioritized because of its direct connexion with desire: "Pornography has a measurable physical effect on its readers. Like propaganda it sometimes changes lives because it uncovers true desires." However, this is more than merely an unqualified endorsement of exploitation. Bey dismisses contemporary Western pornography, and proposes an alternative: "Our culture produces most of its porn out of body-hatred - but erotic art in itself makes a better vehicle for enhancement of being/consciousness/bliss - as in certain oriental works. A sort of Western tantrik porn might help galvanize the corpse, make it shine with some of the glamor of crime." Bey talks of pornography and "its readers", but proceeds to suggest that because of the debasement of language "only images count," hence his contempt for prose and his poetic style. The "poetic porn" he recommends, although linguistically formulated, should aspire to the status of the visual image. This concern with imagery partly derives from Bey's aim of communicating with children. There is, he suggests, "No question of writing to Wild Children. They think in images - prose is for them a code not yet fully digested & ossified, just as for us never fully trusted." And this is important given that his ultimate pornographic proposal is to "Leaflet a playground with inflammatory (muttery) fustletons - pornopropaganda, crackpot samizdat to unchain Desire from its bondage."

Such are the weapons Bey proposes to arm his anarchic jihad. But he also proposes images of a future earthly paradise which echo the visions of contemporaries such as Fredy Perlman and John Zeman. At one point he avers: "To shed all the illusory rights & hesitations of history demands the economy of some legendary Stone Age - shamans not priests, bards not lords, hunters not police, gatherers of paleolithic lasiness, gentle as blood, going naked for a sign or painted as birds, poised on the wave of explicit presence, the clockless nowever." Like Perlman, he repudiates history and advocates a recovery of primal lifeways. Like Zeman, he recognizes the abolition of spatio-temporal co-ordinates as a fundamental condition of freedom. But he goes further than either in openly proclaiming the metaphorical - or mythical - nature of the "legendary era" which provides a paradigm for an ideal future. (One balks at the affirmation of "hunters", but replaces that term with "foragers" and the vision becomes acceptable.)

"Don't just survive while waiting for someone's revolution to clear your head, don't sign up for the armies of anorexia or bulimia - act as if you were already free", Bey proclaims at one point. And this text indicates that he practises what he preaches. He unashamedly - and quite rightly - asserts his own eccentric proclivities regardless of any offence they might give. And, as with most new Ranter texts, many readers will find something offensive in this volume (e.g., the romanticization of children and criminality à la Gide). But Bey deserves attention - not merely because of the rich texture of his writing, but because he possesses a distinctive and subversive vision. And in this age of intellectual timidity, this is something that cannot be ignored.

John Moore

*Chaos* is available in the UK for £4.50 plus 50p p. & p. from Counter Productions, P.O. Box 556, London SE5

## MUJERES LIBRES

M. Ackelsberg, *Mujeres Libres: Organizing Women During the Spanish Revolution* (DAM, 18 pages, £0.60p)

There's only one thing wrong with this pamphlet: it's too short. Ackelsberg sketches out the development of a feminist current originating in discontent women members of the Madrid and Barcelona CNT's, and developing into a national independent women's movement in 1936. The organization grew rapidly during the early months of the Spanish Revolution, and by 1937 27,000 women had formed 147 groups across Republican Spain. *Mujeres Libres* ('Free Women') pressed for immediate reforms in women's lives and were therefore critical of the liberal-Republican-Communist coalition which came to dominate Republican Spain. Campaigns for the encouragement of female literacy, for the better training of women workers, for equal salaries and for the development of health care and sex education facilities were all led by *Mujeres Libres*.

Ackelsberg analyses the friction between the mainstream CNT and its women members, and comments on the inadequacies of anarcho-syndicalist theory and practice. Predictably, despite the CNT's theoretical recognition of the need for women's liberation, it proved unwilling to make such causes a priority in its day-to-day practices. But the relationship between anarcho-syndicalism and feminism should not be seen as simply confrontational. In many ways *Mujeres Libres* represented a development of anarcho-syndicalist theory, taking the CNT's goal of synthesising the values of individuality and communality, and applying these principles to women's lives.

DAM's reproduction of this essay omits the footnotes and references which can be found in the original in *Feminist Studies* 11 (1985), pp.63-84. But even without its footnotes, this is a well-written, interesting pamphlet, at once critical and sympathetic to its subject. Hopefully, it is a sign that a longer work will soon be appearing.

Sharif Gemie

## Aquarian Conspiracy

Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (London: Paladin, 1986). pp.496. ISBN 0 586 08390 1.

As the hemorrhaging decade of the 1980s draws to its sickening close, it seems an appropriate moment, before lurching into the final decade of the twentieth century, to appraise the failures and lost opportunities of the enervated eighties. Reviewing Ferguson's book provides a perfect pretext for commencing such an autopsy. First published in 1980, and hence essentially concerned with the seventies, its time-specific subtitle ensures that within a few months it will become an historical artefact.

Ferguson's text, frequently cited as a quintessential New Age work, propounds the thesis that an informal network of people aims to effect "radical change in the United States". These loosely confederated individuals wittingly or unwittingly comprise the Aquarian Conspiracy. Reviewing developments in consciousness research, the new physics, political theory, pedagogy, work patterns, spiritual praxis, and personal relationships, Ferguson suggests that collectively they constitute an entirely new paradigm, an emergent form of consciousness which can effectuate a transition to the next stage in human evolution. This "transformative vision" has arisen at this particular historical juncture because developments in commu-

nication has allowed increasing numbers of people to gain an unprecedented "understanding of how transformation occurs". Henceforth, the process of change need no longer be haphazard, but can be consciously directed.

*Transformation -- a key work in Ferguson's vocabulary -- manifests itself in various fields, but the fundamental paradigm shift underlying them all remains "the transformation of consciousness". The process of becoming "conscious of one's consciousness" constitutes the central focus. Personal paradigm shifts -- the basic transformative act -- commence when individuals "pay attention to the flow of attention itself". Rendering body-mind process conscious through attentiveness empowers people by making them aware of the capacity to shift levels of consciousness and draw upon their enormous reserves of untapped energy -- potentialities, intuition, creativity. Psychotechnologies, "systems for a deliberate change in consciousness" (e.g., biofeedback, meditation, body therapy), can enhance this capacity. But personal transformation cannot remain confined within the parameters of individual selves, and possesses wider connotations.*

On the one hand, Ferguson claims a causal link between personal and social transformation: "Just as personal transformation empowers the individual by revealing an inner authority, social transformation follows a chain reaction of personal change." "Eventually," she proclaims, "anyone concerned with the transformation of the individual must engage in social action." The envisaged radical social change, however, remains posited on the failure of politics, and attempts an inversion of its priorities. Rather than social change promoting new character structures, revolutions in consciousness are to generate social transformation: "the Aquarian Conspiracy is a different kind of revolution, with different revolutionaries. It looks to the turnabout in consciousness of a critical number of individuals, enough to bring about a renewal of society."

On the other hand, Ferguson maintains that personal transformation (coupled with its social sequel) also possesses evolutionary connotation. Indeed, it remains tantamount to "furthering the evolution of consciousness". Individuals, in transforming themselves by paying attention to inner and social processes, are energizing "the conscious evolution of consciousness". And this remains significant given that "individual evolution may lead to collective evolution", raising the possibility that human evolution can be deliberately and consciously induced.

This cluster of ideas, or some of its constituents, may appeal to anarchists, particularly given the libertarian aspects of Ferguson's political vision. Sympathetic to sexual equality, ecological thinking, development in small scale or appropriate technology, less constricting personal relationships, non-violence, networking structures instead of hierarchies, and so on -- her ideas may seem compatible. But I would suggest that any resemblance must remain superficial. If some of her ideas are concordant, the accompanying ideology is certainly not.



CLIFF HARPER ARTIST

Ferguson entitles one chapter of her book *"The American Matrix for Transformation"* -- a revealing indication of her identification with one of the variants of the predominant American ideology. In a text which does not once mention the word *imperialism*, the assertion that "the American experiment was consciously conceived as a momentous step in the evolution of the species" remains not only fatuous but also abhorrent. Howard Zinn's *A People's History* of the United States is a useful source for exploring the responses of genocidally-exterminated Indians, slaves, impoverished workers, and suppressed women (but unfortunately not extinct animal species) who were found under the iron heel of this one small step for mankind. In a text which nowhere acknowledges the existence of *cultural imperialism*, the statement that the Aquarian Conspiracy version of the American dream is "a framework for non-materialist expansion" remains naïve to the point of complicity. In this context, the positive characterization of science, technology -- the "great technological developments of our [sic] civilization" -- and in particular communication media, which impose the standardization of industrial totalitarianism through McLuhan's global village, begins to make sense. Manifest destiny returns in a new form -- a synthesis of science and mysticism, and an updated amalgam of populism and American Transcendentalism.

The accuracy of this characterization appears when one considers the political ideology and aims of the Aquarian Conspiracy. "The political perspective of the Aquarian Conspiracy is best described as a kind of Radical Centre" -- a position which provides "a synthesis of conservative and liberal tradition." The Radical Centre maintains a revolutionary orientation, but "a revolution means that power changes hands, of course" -- not that power is dissolved. "The essential intent is the redistribution of power." Americans are "increasingly aware of the impotence of existing institutions -- government, schools, medicine, church, business -- to deal collectively with mounting problems." These institutions do not -- of course -- produce such "problems". Hence, despite Ferguson's claim that institutions must be transformed, not reformed, her position remains essentially meliorist. She does not call for the abolition of the state, but for decentralized, responsive government ("government to foster growth, creativity, co-operation, transformation, synergy"). She does not call for anarchy, but autarchy -- self-government, further democratization which leaves the principle of governance virtually untouched in a wider context of functional control structures. She does not call for the destruction of the *fuehrerprinzip*, although she recommends a more fluid distribution of power, and

a responsible leadership: "*The true leader senses and transforms the needs of followers.*" And her ideological populism finds a complement in her economic formulations.

Vague attacks on corporations and big business are coupled with the assertion that "entrepreneurship ... is a natural sequel to the transformative process." This typically populist advocacy of *laissez faire* small capitalism provides the context for New Age consumerism: "When ... needs change, as in personal transformation, economic patterns change." But the toil which underpins spending patterns will not, it seems. Work is not to be abolished, but rendered meaningful, "rewarding, not just obligatory" (oh, what a chasm that word "just" manages to bridge!). Class collaboration tactics like worker-participation and flexitime are recommended to rectify the current situation, where "workers and management savage each other periodically, like crazy Siamese twins who don't know that their lifeblood is the same." (Perhaps the workers realize that their previous corpuscles are being sucked out by vampires and invested in bloodbanks.) Work should now offer personal development (instead of the usual retardation) in addition to job enrichment (a sick joke -- who gets rich?) and a humane workplace (a contradiction in terms). "In the new paradigm, work is a vehicle for transformation. Through work we are fully engaged in life." Death, more likely. The shibboleths of middle class America are accorded a new respectability in their New Age garb. But this cannot be entirely surprising, given that almost all the adherents of the Aquarian Conspiracy appear to derive from the professional, business and leisure classes. Nor given that many of its research projects and conferences are funded by banks, corporations, foundations, and the state (including the Pentagon).

At one point Ferguson quotes a revealing remark made by Tom Hayden, quondam leader of Students for a Democratic Society and a co-defendant in the notorious Chicago 8 trial, in 1979:

Those who filled the streets in the '60s may yet fill the halls of government in the '80s, and if we do, I don't believe we will forget our roots. When I was being sentenced by Judge Julius Hoffman at the end of the Chicago trial, he looked bemusedly at me and said, "A smart fellow like you could go far under our system."

Who knows, Your Honor, perhaps I will ...'

Like Hayden, Ferguson -- who writes in a facile optimistic manner typical of most American moral uplift and self-help manuals -- remains trapped in the illusions of many radicals of her generation: naïve, impetuous, and all too blithely eager to embrace power. Writing of the experiences which led her to compose *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, she writes: "The social activism of the 1960s and the 'consciousness revolution' of the early 1970s seemed to be moving towards an historic synthesis: social transformation resulting from personal transformation -- change from the inside out." How delusive this impression

## Ferguson Review (con'd)

now appears! The only consummation America was converging upon consisted of the rise of Reagan, a reactionary backlash, the growth of fundamentalism and the new conformities of enterprise culture. Even if this characterization distorts the massive dissatisfaction with the texture of life in the USA, and the crucial development of vibrant anarchic perspectives, the generalization remains broadly true.

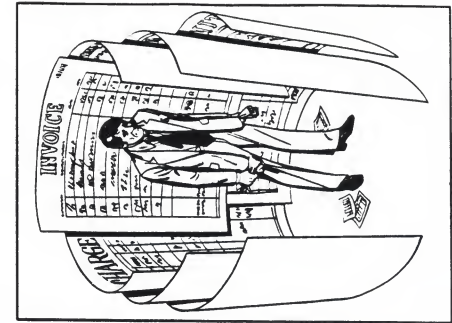
As libertarian radicals, we all live in the shadow of the sixties generation and their contemporary authoritarian epigones. Where are Hayden, Rubin, Leary et al now? Gone, but not forgotten: or forgotten but unfortunately not exorcised. The inanities of Mailer's hipster haunt the radical consciousness yet, although few recognize the provenance of these ideas. And those figures who still remain -- the Ginsbergs and the Burroughs -- exercise a mafia-type stranglehold on the imagination and the counter cultural arena in general.

It is time that the achievements and failures of the 1960s, the 1970s and now perhaps the 1980s were assessed, criticized, assimilated and set aside. The legacy has bowed us down for too long -- it deserves to be appraised sceptically, but also with a discriminating appreciation. The Aquarian Conspiracy remains part of that heritage, surveying as it does some important endeavours of the seventies. Some of its ideas are exciting, while others are merely ideologically credulous. In particular, the basic premise that personal transformation necessarily acts as a catalyst to social transformation needs to be exposed as a non sequitur. One lesson of the present decade must be the extensiveness of the accommodative and co-optative capacities of control structures. But Ferguson's emphasis on the transformative power of so-called psychotechnologies -- how they can break conditioning that has remained firmly resistant to change in ordinary states of consciousness, and how altered states of consciousness can overcome conditioning and generate transformation -- remain invaluable. It will be from such formulations that a new generation will create a fresh wave of anarchic insurrection -- a wave fit for the new decade and the approach of the millennium, a wave which will generate, not Ferguson's partial, but a total transformation, a visionary transfiguration.

John Moore

## 6 Men are beginning to help

Married men in the US now do six per cent more housework than 20 years ago<sup>9</sup>. Only 55% of UK men in one survey had washed the dishes at all in the previous week<sup>10</sup>. One in four women in another UK survey said their husbands were more of a hindrance than a help<sup>4</sup>. No reliable study has ever estimated men's share of the housework at anything more than 1.5 hours a day<sup>11</sup>.



## "WHAT PRICE LIBERTY?: A SKETCH OF SUBURBAN ZERO-SUM POLITICS"

An unknown eye peered from behind the steel plate entry door. "Who are you? What do you want?" Suspicious interrogation complemented the mood of this besieged castle, couched in the middle of Copenhagen's clear cultured opulence. This was an "occupied" or "bezetzen" house (BZ) - a "liberated area" of underclass survival.

Evidence of covert struggle was everywhere. Only a small building of six apartments, "Kapaw" (a "violent explosion" and the site's namesake), is something of a guerrilla fortress. Its first floor is a buffer zone; unoccupied, boarded up, bolted and armoured with sheet metal. A slender rope ladder hangs uncertainly from the steel portal. Flood lights and a rooftop catwalk are the sentinels of ambush. A two-way radio, automatic key return chute and a rickety metal staircase are the practical embodiments of Kapaw's neon wallside proclamations. Says one: "Freedom is not something that you have - it is something you take!"

The Bezetzen movement emerged across Western Europe in the early 1970s, partly as a response to the emergent civic efficacy and individual liberty that characterised the age. At its height around 1983, there were over 150 BZ houses in Germany alone.

The spirit of the time may have paved the way, however, it was and is Europe's high standard of living, long term housing problems, and an increasingly disaffected youth that forms the font of BZ support.

For example, in 1987-8, Denmark and the Netherlands had 9.4% and 11.5% unemployment respectively (*UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 1988). Also, over a four year period, the rent indices of Denmark and Norway jumped by 36 and 43 points (*1982-6 Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, Institute of Labour, Geneva, International Labour Organisation, 1987). One must be careful with causal statistical associations. Nevertheless, an obvious relationship exists between high rent levels, limited rental opportunities, a large, state-dependent underclass, and the size of the BZ

movement. It is not surprising then, that Scandinavia, and particularly Denmark, has the strongest and most militant occupied house movement.

"Kapaw" is one of Copenhagen's three main BZ houses, along with "Morn Styan" (Sorte Hest), and "Baldersgade". Each has a semi-permanent population of 15-20, with a floating group of 5-10. The majority of members are in the 16-24 age group. Many are recent high school leavers, fresh from the parental nest. Most are unemployed.

Their youth and economic position are exacerbated by the facts. In 1986, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands each had the unemployed 0-24 year olds as the second largest group (*ibid*). It is the most excluded from this sector from which the BZ movement draws its life. Hence, the squat society is predominantly composed of punks, anarchists, socialists, communists, angry young men and assorted anti-norms. Their black punk leather and studded denim prompted one anxious visitor to remark, "They seem like bikies with a home"; a home which has been perpetually provisional since the early 1970's.

Ironically, their tenuous plight strengthens group loyalty, while their youth and fierce individualism fractures political unity. There is only a loose, but universal commitment to 'anti-politics' as in; "Resistance to computerisation, alienation, repression of women, exploitation of the Third World, destruction of nature (and) militarisation of society" ("Our Resistance", Pamphlet from the Anarcho-Syndicalists Organisation, DEMOS, Copenhagen, November, 1988).

It is apparent that many resisters yearn for a peaceful, equal, and meaningful society. These humanitarian ideals are only expressed in the negative. When combined with violence, reason denies the humanist foundations upon which such ideas rest.

More specific propaganda is directed against such institutions as NATO and the EEC which are unions of ... "police cooperation, foreign policy cooperation, common weapons development, etc.". (Speech from demonstration against EEC Summit, Copenhagen, 1/12,87). Both form the tentacles of capitalism; "A system that builds upon the plundering of, and exploitation of, nature and people" (*ibid*).

Contrary to the media myth, the political activities of the Bazedas are largely confined to mind-changing, through leaflets, articles and demonstrations. For example, in March 1983, "Kapaw" launched a propaganda campaign aimed at schools and colleges. For ten days, a hired bus travelled to student centres, giving free pamphlets, talks and films.

Direct action, often in the individualist anarchic tradition, is a respected outlet of dissent in BZ circles, for "Without practice, all this is empty talk" (*ibid*). In Denmark and elsewhere, such "practice" involves police confrontation, smashing bank

windows or fire bombing Shell service stations (Shell has a large stake in South Africa).

Every year, BZ'ers throughout Europe stage an "Action Week" of staggered demonstrations. It is here that the uglier side of "practice" has been manifest. Helmeted, masked youths dare police provocation. The front line, all-black "Autonomes" are often the first to tango with Mars. It is unfortunate that the dominant image of the movement is based on perceived action rather than causes. Popular support is hamstrung due to BZ exclusion from the mainstream media, and their own tacit anti-intellectualism. Explains one inhabitant, "It's much easier to say we want to smash that because it's bad".

The due process of liberal democratic party politics is also seen as a corrupt inhibitor of change. The party system, and its compromise inducing effects, are rejected by frustrated BZ efficacy. Also, the legal basis upon which democracy rests is the *modus operandi* of suppression. "Empty talk" thus surrenders to the clenched fist.

Police response to BZ agitation has been swift and en masse. Every major occupied house in Europe has been subject to expulsion attempts. Some of the more vulnerable houses have night watches. Most use two-way radios to monitor police frequencies.

"Morn Styan" has been attacked several times since 1980. Police trucks surround the building. Fully clad riot police then try and storm the entrance, often proving fruitless. Tear gas is pumped into unboarded windows. "Baldersgade", when surrounded earlier this year, actually *welded themselves in*. The siege was abandoned.

It is often said that the logic of revolution creates its own demise. As police violence escalates, so does BZ reaction. The police are well padded with helmets, batons and shields. The BZers answer with motorbike helmets and stolen police shields. When the Danish police first used tear gas in 1981, the BZers responded with gas masks and their own home-made love potions. It is clear that the State names the stakes. This turns BZ reactive violence into a Semtex boomerang.



## ZERO-SUM (CON'D)

This is perhaps the most ironic element of BZ survival struggle. Mere continued existence has necessitated the resort to violence, which further attracts police pressure. This becomes a form of 'reactive roulette', with a load wheel.

I encountered extreme distaste for change through persuasion or non-violent direct action. Such "pacifists" and "hippies" are seen as mere fodder for the coercive state. One young woman, fresh off night watch, explains; "These people (pacifists), they stand in front of us against the police with white flags, and we can't throw stones, so ... we nearly lost a house that way".

It is easy to adopt a jaundiced view of the occupation movement if all one sees is the sensational destruction. Alongside the BZers general egalitarianism, runs a conscious, daily attempt to build counter-norm personal and group relations.

There is a planning meeting every week where most major decisions are made. No chairperson heads the group. Voices are heard through strength of personality and the belief that all should have a say. Says one inhabitant, "We talk, and when we have most of the arguments in the talk, then we put it to the whole group". The functioning of a group without positional authority, law, coercion or compulsion, can be seen as a threat to the foundations of modern mass democracy itself.

Nevertheless, this form of loose, populist Rousseauianism does possess some of the foibles of most democracies. Apathy is "a major problem; to get these people (the politically inert) going is very important as there are so many in society who just let it go".

They appear, in a rudimentary and undogmatic fashion, to be trying to fashion a social alternative, free from the evils of authority or majoritarian tyranny. Still, "There is always someone who is sitting and not saying anything, but we have to make a decision".

However, the long term demise of these "liberated areas" has begun. Although "Sorte Heete", "Baldergade" and "Kapaw" have existed for 20 to 30 years, the escalation of the war in the suburbs is taking its toll. Several houses have fallen, while others have been defused by European governments, through tacit recognition of their right to exist.

This creeping cooption has been going on since 1983, and is most common in Germany where police power is considerably greater than in Scandinavia. "Haffenstrasse" (Hamburg, Germany), was a substantial BZ community of 150-70 people in three apartment blocks, occupying half of an entire street. This was one of the first BZ houses to be allowed direct dialogue with the government. The result was an ending of police pressure and local government antagonism. "Haffenstrasse" has thus ceased to be part of the frontline revolutionary struggle. The German and Danish governments now label many former BZ squats as "Youth Houses", effectively ending the resistance and diffusing reaction. They become places where people can live, rent free, make music, find work or hang out. In return, the government does not have to waste police man hours, or attract unsavoury publicity. The inhabitants also repair the often dilapidated buildings, with free (government) materials. They can also be



CLIFF HARPER ANARCHISM

more readily accounted for by the bureaucracy with a social security office often conveniently located.

Forced evictions and new housing have mortally wounded the hard core garrisons for freedom. Cooption and official recognition are perhaps more deadly. The ending of the protracted battle is often followed by a loss of BZ solidarity, and hence the unity of interests necessary for democratic experimentation. Communal decisions and common eating areas disappear. The European powers—that-be are finally realising what they always wanted - quiet, subsidised welfare housing.

## SOURCES

Formal and informal interviews conducted in Copenhagen, Berlin and Hamburg, with sympathisers and actual inhabitants, between August 28 and September 3, 1988.

UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 1988.

1982-6 Yearbook of Labour Statistics, Institute of Labour, Geneva, International Labour Organisation, 1987.

"Our Resistance" and "Speech from the (Copenhagen) demonstration against the EEC summit", DEMOS Bookshop (1/12/87), Anarcho Syndicalists Organisation, Copenhagen.

## Julian Dahl



CLIFF HARPER ANARCHISM

## AN ORDER OF BLAKEAN ANARCHO-GREENS

I have received a copy of a short paper by this title from Peter Cadogan. He has said it is not for general publication, but that copies may be circulated to anyone who might be interested. As Cadogan has written before in BAR most of you will know the sort of tendency he represents. Please write him if you would like a copy. Peter Cadogan, 3 Hinchinbrook House, Greville Rd. London NW6 5UP.

## WALTER vs MELTZER

I have copies of letters and replies from this long-running correspondence. Several readers have mentioned that enough space has been given to this argument, which they find tedious, boring, nonsense or worse. No one has written praising the editor for continuing the publication of their accusations and defenses. Personally, I think the discussion is quite fascinating, although I do not understand the fundamental reason for such a long-lived enmity. I have decided, however, to cease publishing the correspondence. I am willing to send copies to anyone who writes me, although probably writing to Nicolas or Albert is the better bet. Nicolas Walter, 88 Islington High St., London N1 8EW. I do not know Albert Meltzer's address, but no doubt he can be contacted through *Black Flag*.

# ANARCHY AND ECCENTRICITY

I welcome the generally positive review of my text, *Anarchy and Ecstasy*, in the February 1989 issue of *BAR*. However, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the assumptions underlying some of Tom Cahill's comments.

In his concluding remarks, Cahill jocosely characterizes *Anarchy and Ecstasy* as "The work of a serious oddball, a dedicated crank, a weirdo," and fears that "mainstream anarchists have left the page long ago." The playful representation of myself as an eccentric is received in the good-natured spirit in which it was written. But this typification, perhaps intended to extenuate the *outré* (and affirmatively *recherche*) nature of my ideas, coupled with the evidently well grounded anxiety that any incendiary notions not introduced with extreme circumspection, will send timorous souls scurrying for cover, remains particularly revealing about contemporary--especially British--anarchism. The very fact that a reviewer in the present context needs to forfend negative reader reaction in this way is indicative of the hidebound, ill-informed and unadventurous nature of "mainstream anarchists" in this country today. *Anarchy and Ecstasy* was composed precisely in contraposition to this prevalent morbidity.

An important difference exists between works which are *outré*--i.e., visionary and liberatory--and those which are merely cranky and crackbrained. The former are exciting because they open vistas; the latter are dull because they confine one within the closed system of an individual's (or sometimes a group's) obsessions. (I sense that Cahill recognizes this distinction and places my compositions in the first category.) But to ascertain whether a particular deviant text belongs in either one or the other of these classifications, it often remains necessary to understand the context--in this case the intellectual context--within which it was produced.

*Anarchy and Ecstasy* seems weird or odd to readers who remain unaware of the ideational current (what orthodox critics would call a tradition) within which I operate. This current--unfortunately rather recedite in Britain at present--consists of a range of contemporary American writers, including Fredy Perlman, John Zerzan, Starhawk, Hakim Bey and Bob Black. In their different ways--which include the recovery of primal lifeways, rejecting history, developing a magicopolitical synthesis, analyzing the fundamental principles of control, and creating fresh and subversive styles of expression--all of these are converging on a total critique of dominance, and a vision of an anarchic future utterly at variance with those previously propounded. And all, moreover, broadly concur, to paraphrase the title of a Bob Black essay, that anarchism constitutes one of the impediments to anarchy.

Apart from the comprehensiveness of its critique and the expansiveness of its vision, why have I aligned

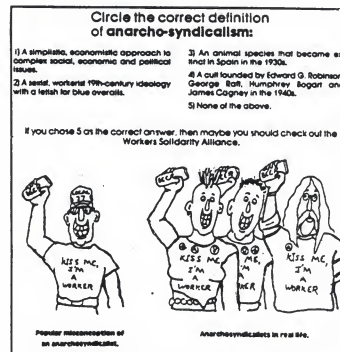
myself with this American current, rather than relate to and work within the British anarchist tradition? The reasons are not difficult to discern. Almost without exception, this tradition remains thoroughly moribund. The exceptions comprise a few individuals working toward a total critique through issues like animal liberation. But the mainstream remains entirely pathological, divided into those entrenched in the nineteenth century, and those--punk anarchists--whose whole lifestyle is defined by multinationals and media technology. Both tendencies, of course share an untenable and absurdly fetishistic attitude toward the proletariat.

I am proud to proclaim that I have never read *Freedom*, *Black Flag*, *The Raven*, *Class War* and so on, nor ever shall, unless they are radically transformed. A flick through their pages in a bookshop remains more than sufficient to convince almost anyone of how unbelievably boring and irrelevant are such publications. Their stultifying narrowness immediately gives the impression that both editors and contributors must have experienced an almost total atrophy of their faculties. Above all prevails a sense of closure: attenuated concerns, meagre writing, an imperviousness to new ideas, a general enervation. These publications conform exactly to the definition of crankiness outlined above. They, not *Anarchy and Ecstasy*, can properly be characterized as the products of oddballs and crackbrains--as anyone with a vital human sensibility would realize.

Mainstream anarchists might accuse me of obscurantism because I write about arcane matters, and use a defamiliarizing vocabulary in order to combat the continual debasement of language by the control complex. But they are the true obscurantists. Infatuated by their obscurity, they enshroud themselves in the black flag, not of anarchy, but of dogma. And who wants to descend into that murky pit? I prefer to investigate the cosmic gestalt of anarchy, whose mysteries glisten and spangle like stars strewn across a sable sky.

John Moore

## ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE ITS IMAGE



REMOLIN PERCH

I am now about to do what I hoped others will do more frequently, reply to a reply to a review. It feels a bit strange, as I am the editor of this *BAR*. Somehow I think of myself as slightly invisible. But I did write the short review of John Moore's publication. It was a positive review, because I thought it was a good pamphlet. I wish more like it were being written in Britain today. It should be made clear that because he has volunteered to be book reviews editor, and because I like the genre within which he is situated, this does not mean that other styles will be discouraged in *BAR*.

John (whom I also know a bit from the "social interaction" promoted by going to ARG meetings) is just about right in his interpretation of my remarks. Those who interest my deepest passions are usually "serious oddballs" (whether living friends or those who I "only" read). I must admit that, especially lately, my own life has been dominated by "neighbours", another necessary flavour in the salad of oppositional life. Quite different than oddballs. For example, I regularly read most of *Freedom*, *The Raven*, *Black Flag*, as well as other mags of that sort. On the other hand, like John, I find them pretty boring, on the whole. What is intriguing to me is whether reading that sort of stuff, and perhaps the corresponding experience of everyday life (like in the small town I have lived in for 18 years) destroys the vital theoretical juices.

I basically like the sort of theoretical work done by those John also finds exciting and inspiring. I have often wondered (as an American living in Britain) why such writing was not more popular here. There is no doubt it appeals to me! I thought it was because I was American maybe. What if John has been captured by a high class version of Dallas? And its all really American Imperialism reaching deep into Ealing. Hip, of course.

I read the last line of John's letter and thought, "omigod, cosmic gestalt of anarchy, whose mysteries glisten and spangle like stars strewn across a sable sky!". What will "they" think of that? I'll leave the "they" to your imagination. And then I thought that really they ought to be able to understand that phrase, even if there's a twinkle or a snigger. A feeling, a thought, a whisper...so he's not William Blake, but then neither is Fredy Perlman. I know that feeling. John seems to say that anyone who understands nothing about the cosmic gestalt of anarchy (and especially those who won't even bother to try) cannot possibly be a genuine agent of revolt.

What actually is the "mainstream"? I know that I actually used the term, but I often wonder if I really know about this. For example...there may be 150 human beings who look at these words. Possibly quite a few are anarchists. Or some sort of quasi-anarchist. How would you find out what was "mainstream"? Counting up people demonstrating (for what?)? Whose mag had the largest circulation (which mags?)? Survey research of some population or other? Ask everyone you know personally? Be-

lieve what is written in some anarchist mag or other? Maybe the sorts of writing and thinking that John is "promoting" already is the actual mainstream of anarchist thinking, at the grass roots, on the farm. Just a thought.

There is a niggle I get when reading John's piece. While I am actually glad that he sounds so convinced of what he is doing that he will carry on regardless, I am slightly troubled by his disdainful dismissal of the "true obscurantists" and those who are "pathological". Of course you have to be extreme to be on the frontiers of R & D in any part of life. The passionate commitment gets one a fair bit further than a balanced view. Frontierwise. While I actually have something like the same feeling, I guess I'm not absolutely certain that I know, speaking as an anarchist or a revolutionary. However, having said I was a bit bothered, that's all that needs saying. That same annoying tone also engenders a minor "Nietzsche feeling" in me, and we all know how "dangerous" that is. Know what I mean? Definitely mixed feelings.

Finally, while editing this *Bulletin*, I have typed and laid out the work of oddballs of all sorts. But I must admit I enjoy some more than others.

Tom Cahill



## ABOUT FREEDOM

Zygmunt Bauman, *Freedom*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988, pp.106.

Unlike most academic discourses on the concept of freedom Bauman is content to rest his analysis on a straight sociological interpretation of the human predicament. No attempt is made here to come to terms with anything like the existentialist proposition that freedom is an inherent property of human beings, or that it is an ideal to be cherished above all other considerations as some liberals and anarchists might have it. Political, religious and philosophical concepts of freedom are deemed uninteresting because they neglect "the fact that freedom is itself a social fact, socially produced and socially endowed with the meaning it happens to carry at a particular time or place." (p.28) Freedom is not a property of the individual, but a social relation. In a nutshell this is the basic message of Bauman's text.

The argument is not altogether unfamiliar. As Bauman puts it, freedom, considered historically, has always meant exemption from one thing or another. Whether that be the manumission of slaves in classical antiquity or baronial freedoms secured at the expense of an enervated monarchy, as enshrined within the Magna Carta, freedom qua exemption has always led to privilege. Yet, according to Bauman, the very nature of freedom underwent a substantial shift with the rise of liberal theory, the

arrival of capitalism and the entrance of modernity.

Philosophy's error was to assume that the new individuality was a condition common to all. Whereas sociological insight reveals that just as in times past freedom continued to remain the possession of some not all. Western individualism, then, evolved in response to a parallel transformation in the locus of loyalty and obedience. With the demise of any single nucleus for allegiance a multiplication in the centres of authority engendered a discordant din within which individuals now had to arbitrate, choice was unavoidable as was the burden of responsibility that went with it. Thus, according to Bauman, the "freedom of the modern individual arises therefore from uncertainty; from a certain 'under-determination' of external reality, from the intrinsic controversiality of social pressures." (p.41)

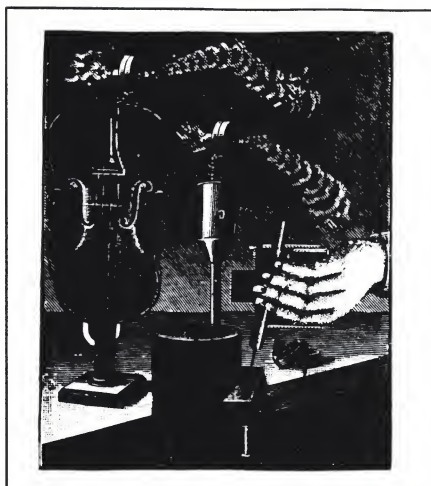
Bauman has the perspicacity to realise that human beings are not solitary animals, but social creatures; that if humankind has a need for freedom at the same time it cannot do without social interaction. And it is recognition of the fact that "it is in communication with other people that the affirmation of one's choices is established and actions are given meanings" (p.51), that serves as a reminder that we, inhabitants of western, advanced industrial nations, are now experiencing a relatively new phase of capitalism.

Gone are the days when capitalism was equated with the free self-assertive actions of the entrepreneur, in which only the few could ever be truly successful, and in its place one finds a capitalism characterised by a much wider freedom of consumer choice. Consumerism reigns supreme. Hence for Bauman, self-identity and self-fulfilment are no longer achieved in the work place or in the process of labour itself, but outside of the factory in the consumer market. There is no intrinsic pleasure in standing over a lathe for forty hours a week, no inherent satisfaction to be gained from the processing of application forms and other administrative materials; rather happiness and fulfilment are to be sought in the benefit of material goods that work confers.

Of course similar strands of thought have been utilised to good effect by the Situationists and The Pleasure Tendency, and continue to play an active part in anarchist analysis today. Nevertheless, the highlighting of the invidious methods of social control employed by capitalism deserves much credit (n.b., Fred Oughton's article Training is good for you (joke) in Freedom, April, 1989), and Bauman is more than adept at this task.

He is also quite proficient in perceiving that freedom remains today a privilege. Even if it is accessible to many more than hitherto, and this is a moot point, freedom still comes at a price - money to be more exact. Thought of as a social relation freedom requires affluence. Those who have not the resources to compete in the symbolic rivalry of the consumers' arena, and there are many of them, are obviously inappropriately placed to be controlled by any means of seduction. The repressive bureaucratic machinery that purports to administer social welfare now moves into position. The kid-gloves come off as public servants invade the inner reaches of one's private life. Intensive investigations of the kind many are familiar with constitute the bedrock of what Bauman calls the "unspoken function of welfare" (p.89); the deliberate yet covert method of creating a gulf, that is readily recognisable to all who can see, between the rational, normal member of the consumer community and the parasites and scroungers who are too idle to work and too ignorant to know any better.

But commendation must be tempered with censure. Bauman's account of the effects of consumer capitalism is both thorough and admirable. It is, however, to my mind, also flawed. There is much to be said for the belief that life is now a private affair between the consumer and the market; that the seduction of consumerism has facilitated a partial withdrawal of the state from the frontline of legitimisation and the coercion of conformity and that, therefore, citizens of consumer capitalism have witnessed a disappearance of politics. However, Bauman's reluctance to expand upon and incorporate any philosophical consideration of freedom or free will - he openly assumed that individuals possess free will and, moreover, this faculty is of seminal importance to the concept of choice and action which are endemic in his interpretation of freedom - amounts to a serious



deficiency in a work designed to shed light on so vital and weighty a topic.

Although he is right to stress the centrality of choice and action to the human condition, and is to be extolled for drawing attention to the detrimental consequences, relating to personal autonomy and individual freedom, that flow from bureaucratic determination of needs, he is plainly wrong when insisting that some people are free. One does not have to be a full-blooded supporter of existentialism (and I believe that anarchists would do well to listen to existentialists for they have much to say that is of value) to perceive that people are not free. The crux of the matter is that the vast majority, if not all, with the possible exception of claimants, are seduced into the illusion of freedom. The deceptive interplay of market, advertising and consumer alternatives disguises the fact that most are compelled to choose from a pre-determined selection of goods and lifestyles.

Even if it proves impossible to accept the existentialist's proposition that individuals make choices from a position that is free from all determination, one can go along with the general spirit and tenor of their argument and insist that, individuals today are not left to their own devices but are guided, often like cattle, into the fresh pastures that the market and in consequence capitalism find it expedient to offer. That we choose from the ever growing array of consumer durables is largely because of the fact that when making our choice we believe that we are choosing to be free. The truth is somewhat different, and that is why I, for one, believe, as Bauman intimates, that consumerism's downfall may rest in its inability to satiate mankind's drive for freedom, for self-rule, self-management and active participation in public affairs. It is anarchists that ought to encourage and foster such sentiment.

## OUR GENERATION

On account of being selected to act as one of the editors of *Our Generation*, I have two requests to make of readers (especially British residents). Anyone who has a review or article is encouraged to send them direct to Montreal (Suite 444, 3981 boulevard St-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2W 1Y5, Canada) or to me. I think I was partly selected to try and get a few more articles from the UK. Secondly, anyone who wishes to purchase a copy of the magazine can do so directly through me. One of the "privileges" of being on the editorial board is that one is sent five copies of this periodical and billed for \$40.00. So I need to flog them fast. I have the two latest issues (contents reprinted in BAR). Ring or write fast as I need to move these mags or else my cash flow will be severely damaged.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

From time to time, I am sent publications which I have not solicited and which may be of interest to readers. I shall print the tables of contents of these on a special page near this item, but thought a bit of verbal description might be in order. You may not have heard of them either.

**Demolition Derby**, C.P. 1554, Succ. B, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3B 3L2 (free).

*As if to help me describe this 32 page, tabloid style newsprint journal, they list publications that have an outlook similar to Demolition Derby. No Picnic, Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed, Fifth Estate, Interrogations Pour la Communaute Humaine, and Live Wild or Die are on the list. They have extremely creative graphics and appear to have some skill in layout and presentation. Those who create it do not wish to call themselves by any convenient label, but advocate the abolition of the state, the patriarchy, money, cities and industrialism (among other things). Someone called Michael Williams does a good deal of work and John Zerzan has a long article in the first issue. The second and succeeding issues are promised on an irregular basis.*

**Neighbourhood Works**, Center for Neighbourhood Technology, 2125 W. North Ave, Chicago, IL 60647 (\$35 for one year, bi-monthly). *This 32 page magazine is very specifically directed to those working at a grass-roots level. It is, in fact, very American in its references and information. I would also not call it an anarchist magazine, but often find useful information in it as to what is happening in America, with neighbourhood related information.*

**The Anarchist Age**, Mutual Aid (the name for cheques and money orders), P.O. Box 20, Parkville 3052, Australia (2 issues overseas cost \$14.00). *This 38 page soft cover magazine is issue one of the successor to Libertarian Workers Bulletin. The group that publish it (Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society) have existed in Melbourne since 1977. After some discussion recently, they concluded that this was the new journal they wanted to publish. They hope to publish twice a year. It is clearly laid out with the previously intriguing list of various anarchist publications throughout the world. Nice to see these mutations from one style (they used to be more a tabloid format) to another.*

**Common Sense: A Journal of a wholly new type**, (contact) Werner Bonefeld, 16 Keir St., Edinburgh (£2.00 per copy). *Number six of this 88 page A4 size journal was published in November 1988. Number 7 was promised for March 1989. It attempts to be a "relay station for the exchange of critical ideas", being critical of the journals of academia with their tendency to talk down. It wants those who read to write and those who write to read. There is no doubt that the individuals who write in Common Sense are intellectuals, but they are trying to set their own agenda outside the constrict-*

*tions of the normal intellectual channels. "Critical theory" in a wide sense is the key to their work. The variation in typeface leads me to think they print typescripts as they receive them. Although not anarchist, it will no doubt have much of interest to some readers.*

**Green Perspectives**, P.O. Box 111, Burlington, Vermont, USA, 05402 (\$1.00). *The latest six page sheet from the Green Program Project is Part II of Janet Biehl's "Women and the Democratic Tradition". This is the same series of broadsheets in which some of Murray Bookchin's work is printed. In my view, anyone who wants to understand current thinking amongst anarchistic greens in America, must read these sheets as they come out.*



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## SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ANARCHIST GROUP

Attending a meeting of the Anarchist Research Group on Saturday 18th July 1989 I heard David Goodway give a stimulating talk on "Anarchism and Intellectuals: The Case of Herbert Read and Alex Comfort." I thought about the meeting and following discussion as I sat in a traffic jam in, what was for me one of the worst rainstorms of the year. Nothing focuses one's mind better than sitting in a cloudburst on a motorway. One wonders if one is going to float away. The opening sequence of "8." came to mind.

David mentioned that although they published a number of his works Herbert Read had been dismayed that the anarchists in Freedom Press would ever do much to achieve the anarchist revolution. Remember this was a different Freedom Press with different people to the group today. This led to a general discussion of the role of intellectuals in the anarchist movement and being in a quixotic mood I mentioned a friend who finding a well-known anarchist teaching in his university department approached her with the suggestion they should get together to propagandise the ideas in the university, with a completely negative result. I noted one of the ARG members sitting there had been around in Birmingham University when I was Secretary of Birmingham Anarchist Group. I gently pointed out, with respect, this comrade had never, to my knowledge, attended a single meeting of the then Birmingham Anarchist Group. Intellectuals often provided a vehicle for our thinking but never met us in the flesh.

Why I said this was not to put anyone on the spot but because being long in the tooth I am often asked by younger anarchists "You were around in the year dot, did you ever meet (well if not the founding fathers of anarchism, I'm not that old) these public figures who wrote about anarchism." I usually have to answer "No" and usually add a suffix "well I was active in the provinces" but I have thought that even if I had been in London it would not have made much difference. There are anarchist movements and anarchist movements rather like layers of skin in an onion. London particularly is prone to splits and factions which frequently continue long after the people who originally quarrelled have moved on. On the other hand most of our intellectuals aren't in 'the movement' per se.

I think this is curious because within socialism, and Marxism particularly, intellectuals do appear to involve themselves meeting-wise and often organisationally. It is only within the anarchist movement where there does appear to be a divide between the visible producers of knowledge and the laity. Is it anyone's fault?

The members of the Anarchist Research Group hotly protested either they were involved in other groups or that they found the activities of many so-called anarchist groups frankly embarrassing and give a number of instances, which I think was David Goodway's point about Herbert Read.

Looking back over my past life, always dangerous either because there are so many gaps in one's memory or because one has lost one's time sense related to sequence of events, I tried to visualise how I felt about intellectuals. Firstly I would probably not be a conscious anarchist were it not for intellectuals especially Herbert Read's works as these introduced me to anarchism.

Very few comrades of my acquaintance, except the late Alan Albon, lived anarchist lives, and even he not all the time. We mainly live the same lives as anyone else but see ourselves as different to others in that we think anarchist ideas and express them to others to try and mitigate the stresses society imposes on us. Oh yes and we have our ideals about relationships, events and places and we take up causes and call this activity.

Some of us believe this makes us more virtuous than others especially if we link it to a few ideas to which we pretend to rigidly adhere, call ourselves a name and publish a paper. There is no evidence that makes us happier, better people or more effective. Most real activists of my acquaintance do not rigidly adhere to ideas, do not need to call themselves name or publish a paper.

All they need to do is do it. I keep telling people who want to be activists it is quite simple you just decide what you want to do, the way to do it and then you put one foot in front of another. You do not need groups, position papers or a publication. But it may be nice to meet other people of near enough like mind. Which is a good reason for supporting your local anarchist group.

So what must an anarchist group be and do to encourage others to join in? Well the first thing that needs to be thrown out of the window are the position papers or the demands by the authoritarians in our midst that we all rigidly follow the line or, more precisely, pass a motion that says that this is what we do, whether we do it or not. A cross fertilisation of ideas is crucial.

And if you are into getting or selling publications then take a broad range. When I was in a regional anarchist group in Birmingham in the sixties we sold Freedom, Peace News, Solidarity, Resistance and so on. We did not necessarily agree with all the contents of all the papers or every issue but we rejected censorship. When I go to some anarchist meetings in London the groups appear to rigidly sell only their own publications although they monotonously claim a 'right to reply' when papers such as Freedom say something they dislike. They, of course, have never been known to give this right to others.

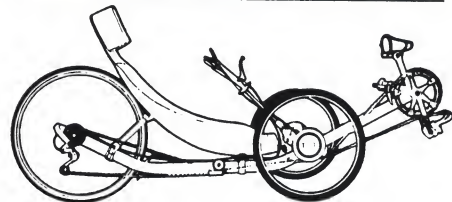
Another thing is the element of trust, of acceptance of how others are and from this of support. One should not do things which might deliberately upset others although people have to be understanding here. For example I try not to upset vegetarians provided they remember I am not one. I try not to upset feminists provided they do not try to force their ideas down my throat in an authoritarian manner as if they represent all women which they do not. They only represent themselves. I treat homosexuals with understanding but I expect them to realise most of us are heterosexual.

Some groups concentrate on minority interests too much. I tried participating in an anarchist group in New Cross once which turned out to be largely composed of feminist homosexuals of both sexes who saw work in this area as paramount and I found it impossible to work with them.

Some groups, like the London Anarchist Forum, are largely discussion groups exploring and trying to extend anarchist theory and relate this to practicalities. People accuse us of lacking activity although most of us have full-time jobs, are active in our unions or voluntary bodies, regularly attend others' meetings and conferences and report back to the movement. Other groups do things. I am active in my union - have held most offices and am currently a health & safety representative. I hold offices in three groups concerned with Sociology teaching. I am a director of our residents' association and am a member of over a dozen other bodies. I am constantly accused of not being an activist. My my. I have the feeling many so-called activists are essentially non-joiners who want to attach themselves to an 'active' group to feel virtuous whilst doing practically nothing.

So in conclusion may I say join in with other anarchists in things of common interest. Do not expect if you have just joined the group they will be all supporting your interest. You have just got to work on them. Oh yes and do expect whichever sex you are that people may take an interest in you personally or sexually or both. That's instinctive. It's how society reproduces itself. But establish a space for yourself personally. Most people behave honourably if you treat them with respect. They only get intrigued and vexatious if you make things too much of a mystery.

Peter Neville

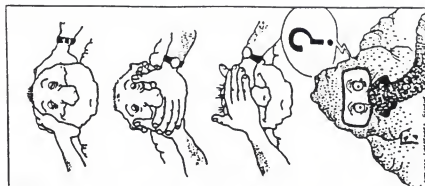


## ON POST-MODERNISM

Dear Tom,

I found Richard Alexander's review of a post-modernist manifesto of interest but somewhat baffling. He writes - quoting the pamphlet: "once we acknowledge the irreducible conceptual element in our experiencing and our knowing there can be no single objective reality, 'external' to theories of it". Correct me if I am wrong, but I thought that this was the essential insight of those nineteenth century rationalist whom Richard wants to drop into the dustbin of history along with 'Freedom' and the classical anarchists? Wasn't the critique of positivism, of contemplative materialism, and of the subject/object dualism the main thrust of these *rationalists* - starting with Hegel, including Marx and Bakunin, and embracing a diversity of people since - anthropologists like Durkheim and Boas, pragmatists like Dewey and Mead, Freud, Whitehead, the existentialists, Hegelian Marxists like Lukacs and Marcuse, Neo-Freudians like Reich and Fromm, as well as most anarchists. But for all these rationalists this critique and these insights did not in the least imply that one should abandon reason, or collapse into relativism or idealism or subjectivism, or deny the reality of the external world and its constraints on knowledge, only the need to "historicize" reason and to refuse to see it as some absolute or infallible guide to our understanding of the world. To equate 'reason' (as Richard seems to do) with "absolute truth", with "objectivism", with positivistic "science" or with "totalitarian thought" is to grossly misunderstand, indeed malign, what these rationalists were trying to say.

Relativism, of course, is as old as the hills. It is not some recent idea of the so-called post modernists who, in any case, are a motley crew without any shared theoretical perspective. Some are latter-day nihilists, some are more scientific than old Descartes, some are important radical figures, some are near fascists. And not all are relativists. Various philosophers and anthropologists have long ago discussed the problems of relativism - its epistemological absurdity, its idealist pretensions, its political ambiguity. Gellner expressed it well when he said that it was like believing in a signpost that could be swung around on its hinges, each direction pointing to the 'truth'. 'Relativism' is no guide at all if we wish to understand the world or challenge hegemonic ideas and structures. Relativism itself seems to be the new form of 'absolutism' and one that sits comfortably with the scholasticism of many academics, the irrationalism of late capitalism and with the theoretical tendency to oblate 'history', 'praxis' and human agency from social discourse. Some post modernists like Foucault and Baudrillard have important and seminal things to say, and are worth studying, but this gives us no warrant to ditch in a cavalier fashion the rationalism of the likes of Bakunin, whose holistic (not totalitarian) philosophy and political theory have much more contemporary relevance than the musings of abstruse literary 'play' of many post-modernists. In any case many of the ideas that are currently floating around as something new and original - like relativ-



ism and various nihilistic postures - are hardly original at all but spring up periodically during every crisis of the capitalist system. But then I suppose that the attempt to link anarchism to the like of Derrida is no more bizarre than Christian anarchism or market socialism, or the attempt to ground anarchism in that other contemporary intellectual fad, sociobiology. Between the 'subjectivism' of much post modernism (and its 19th century forebears like Dilthey and Nietzsche) and the 'objectivism' of theories like sociobiology (and its 19th century forebears like Spencer) - critical reason long ago attempted to point the way. Chomsky and Bookchin are two contemporary anarchists who are part of this 'rationalist' tradition and what they have to say has a good deal more political relevance than the obscurantist essays of the likes of Derri-derri-da.

Best wishes,  
Brian Morris

PS If modernism means what Foucault says it means, and if structuralism is the epitome of post modernism, then Foucault's critique of structuralism must be post post modernism? So it follows that all of those critiques of Foucault are examples of post post post modernism. Yet if you equate modernism with positivism and Enlightenment thought (as all those who have just discovered relativism and hermeneutics seem to) then this critique of Foucault would be post post post post modernism? Yer got it? But note that with Heidegger (the much quoted and revered) there is a counter tendency: his love of parousia and the pre-Socratics makes his style of philosophy ante ante ante modernism? I have heard that a fan of Derrida (the much loved) is presently engaged in producing (by way of a text no less) a synthesis of Heidegger's ontology with a critique of Foucault. This new tendency is to be described as post ante post ante post ante modernism! (this is meant for amusement only).

### LOOK HERE BEFORE YOU TURN THE PAGE!

On the next page, if this new layout system works, you will find a letter not dissimilar to one I have sent out to people making a general enquiry about the Bulletin. I am reprinting the new version here so that all of you know how I am representing "us" and ARG to anyone who drops me a note. Should you have any problems with it, or wish to comment, please tell me as soon as possible. Any suggestions will no doubt be incorporated into the next version. Thanks.

# BULLETIN OF ANARCHIST RESEARCH

Thomas V. Cahill, Editor  
Department of Politics  
University of Lancaster  
Lancaster LA1 4YL

Dear Friend,

During the past few months, there have been a steadily increasing number of general enquiries about the Bulletin. Usually they ask for "information" which may help individuals decide to subscribe or not. Rather than type a similar response several times, I decided to construct a "universal" response. This is it.

BAR was initiated by members of the Anarchist Research Group as method of communicating relevant information amongst a network of researchers who were doing work on some aspect of anarchism. Most of these individuals are anarchists, but some are not. Most live in Britain, although one out of five subscribers to BAR live abroad. Many are activists of one sort or another. Having said all that, the shared interest or passion is research on anarchism.

The Anarchist Research Group itself meets three or four times a year to hear and discuss a paper delivered by a member of the network, as well as to conduct any other business. This meeting has always been in London. We also gather at the History Workshop each autumn, where members of the group have given papers for several years. Before and after these events, there is an increasing social interaction (indeed, schemes and plots are often hatched). Perhaps by the time you get this letter, ARG will have instituted another sort of gathering, during which we meet for a couple of days. There is increasing need for this and many of us hope it will eventually be organised.

BAR is sent on a quarterly schedule to anyone who wants it (although from time to time the Bulletin might be a month or so late). At present, each issue is about 25 pages long. The readers are almost entirely responsible for the content, although the editor makes some contribution. There are reviews, comments, announcements, requests for assistance, sharing of information from abroad, contents of foreign and domestic periodicals, short thought pieces, and just about anything that members send in. Some people comment that we will publish almost anything. From time to time, members have presented special supplements of interest to other members. One, for example, was a bibliography of material on British anarchism. Another was a list of holdings of anarchist material in various archives throughout the world. There are presently about 125 subscribers, and BAR is exchanged with about 50 foreign and domestic periodicals of a related nature.

For this potentially magnificent publication the cost is merely £3.00 if you are exceedingly poor and £4.00 if you are not (six issues). Overseas air mail subscriptions are £6.00. You may subscribe by merely paying the money and opening your post, but that is not really the point. Were I to have my way, subscribers would be "required" to write one contribution, however small, every six issues. However, in my function as editor (or "pipeline"), I do not impose such views on subscriber\members. But it should be made utterly clear that without written contributions from ARG members, there would be a very boring publication popping through your letterbox. Enough said.

Cheques must be made payable to "Bulletin of Anarchist Research". Payment from abroad must be made in sterling, as the cost of cashing cheques in foreign currency means there is nothing left for us. The banks take it all. I emphasize this especially to residents of the USA, who regularly ignore this request and simply write a dollar cheque.

I think that covers most of the usual matters people ask about. I can't really give you a more precise idea of the contents as that depends entirely on the material submitted. Thanks for your enquiry.

## CO-OPERATION: REVIEW

M. Taylor, *The Possibility of Cooperation*  
Cambridge University Press, 1987.

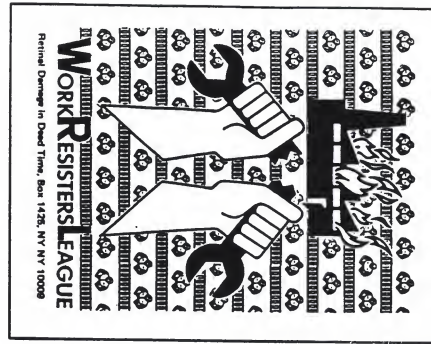
*The Possibility of Cooperation* is a new and much revised edition of Michael Taylor's earlier book, *Anarchy and Cooperation*. It is a contribution to so-called "rational choice theory" as well as a critique of one of the most popular justifications for the state. It is the latter portion of the book which will be of most interest to BAR readers.

"Rational choice theory" is a form of methodological individualism which seems to explain human action in terms of very basic preferences and beliefs in narrowly circumscribed situations. These are called "games" and hence rational choice theory is often also referred to as "game theory". These games are supposed to be schematic analogues of real life situations.

The "Prisoners' Dilemma" is perhaps the best known game and is regarded by many rational choice theorists as having the widest application. A game is a Prisoners' Dilemma when each player has two strategies to choose from, one cooperative, the other not, and each player receives the greatest benefit when he chooses the non-cooperative strategy but the other player does not. The player foolish enough to choose the cooperative strategy receives the lowest payoff. When both players choose the noncooperative strategy, their payoff is one level above the lowest payoff and two levels below the highest payoff. But when both players choose the cooperative strategy, they receive a payoff only one level below the highest payoff. All this is simply how the game is defined.

In these circumstances, the rational choice is to not cooperate. Cooperating is too risky as it easily results in the lowest payoff. Not cooperating is not as risky, because it either yields the highest payoff or the second lowest. But if both players cooperate, they receive a higher payoff than if both of them do not cooperate. This is the dilemma facing the players. In conditions of uncertainty they must assume the worst, that the other will choose not to cooperate. To avoid the risk of receiving the lowest payoff, each player will choose not to cooperate but by doing so receives a payoff lower than what each would have received if both had cooperated.

The Prisoner's Dilemma game is supposed to represent a number of "collective action problems". A collective action problem arises when the seemingly rational choices of individual egoists collectively yield a result no one desires. So, for example, each herdsman with access to a common grazing ground will find it to his advantage to graze as many of his animals as he can, even though the resulting overgrazing will ultimately render the common pasture barren and of no benefit to anyone at all. This is the so-called "tragedy of the commons". The "solution" to this tragedy is for a supervening authority to enforce limits to the number of animals allowed to graze in the pasture.



It is easy to see, from the preceding example, how this sort of analysis can be used to justify the state. Left to their own devices, rational egoists will always choose noncooperative strategies which will leave them worse off than they would have been if they had all chosen to cooperate. The state intervenes and prescribes and prohibits various kinds of behaviour to ensure such things as the preservation of common resources and generally to ensure public order. This creates sufficient certainty to render cooperative strategies rational. The state, as it were, eliminates the risk that the other players in the game will choose the noncooperative strategy.

Taylor never questions the general validity of rational choice theory. In fact, he believes it is an indispensable part of any explanatory social theory. Instead he tried to undercut attempts to use this sort of analysis to justify the state. He does this in primarily two ways. First, he shows that when certain additional elements are introduced into the Prisoners' Dilemma game to make it more realistic - time and the discounting of future payoffs for example - condition voluntary cooperation becomes a rational strategy. Second, he questions whether the state can be regarded as a viable solution to collective action problems.

He does briefly question whether the Prisoners' Dilemma game provides the most accurate model of collective action problems and suggests that in many cases different games, such as the "Chicken" and "Assurance" games, provide a more accurate representation of individual preferences. In the "Chicken" game, the second best payoff is obtained when both players cooperate, and the worst payoff is obtained when both players choose the noncooperative strategy. In the "Assurance" game, the highest payoff is obtained when both players cooperate, and the second highest payoff is obtained when both don't cooperate.

An example of a game of "Chicken" would be a situation where two factories pumping effluent into one lake would create an ecological catastrophe whereas the lake would be able to tolerate effluent from one of the factories only. An example of a game of "Assurance" would be a situation where two people sharing a garden plot would both have to weed the plot to obtain the most benefit from it.

### Taylor Review (con'd)

After providing a more sophisticated and "realistic" analysis of the Prisoners' Dilemma game, including the added component of an indefinite number of players, Taylor concludes that under certain circumstances the cooperation of all or some of the players may emerge spontaneously without the need for a solution external to the game itself, such as state intervention. However, he does argue that voluntary cooperation becomes less likely as the number of players increases, because it becomes progressively more difficult to monitor the behaviour of the other players.

Even where voluntary cooperation breaks down, Taylor notes, there are solutions other than state intervention. One solution is community, which Taylor defines as a group of people with shared beliefs and values whose relationships are direct and many-sided and who practice "generalized reciprocity" (mutual aid). The members of the community can maintain cooperative practices and institutions by applying positive and negative sanctions, such as public censure, to noncooperative persons. Taylor provides many more details of the actual mechanics of communitarian social control in what he describes as the companion volume to this book, *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* (published by Cambridge in 1982).

He also debunks the claim that collective action problems can be solved through the establishment of property rights. The argument for property rights, roughly put, is that private owners of resources such as pastures and lakes will not exploit and degrade them because they cannot pass the cost of the exploitation and degradation onto another party but must bear it themselves. Of course, this is absurd. As Taylor points out, an owner may choose to destroy his resource simply because he places a very low value on the benefits to be derived from it in that distant as opposed to immediate future, and this would appear to be exactly what many capitalists are doing today. The "property rights" solution also ignores capital liquidity. After destroying his privately owned resource, the capitalist can simply invest his money elsewhere.

Another solution to collective action problems which Taylor briefly discusses is the "political entrepreneur" (what loaded terminology!). The political entrepreneur convinces other people that their own actions can make a difference. He can also monitor everyone's behaviour so that conditional cooperators can tell whether their actions are having the desired results. But this "solution" seems to beg the prior



CLIFF HARPER ANARCHY

solution of another collective action problem, namely the creation of the resources and organization necessary for the political entrepreneur to be effective.

What about the state? In the two most interesting chapters of the book, Taylor reconstructs Hobbes and Hume's justifications for the state in light of rational choice theory, and then criticizes their position, drawing in part on classical anarchist theory.

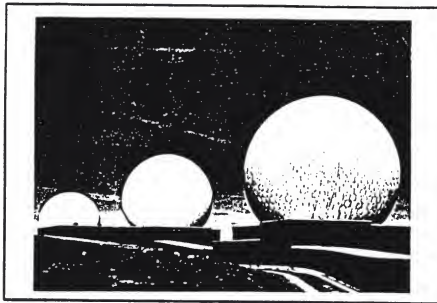
In *Leviathan*, Hobbes in effect argues that people in a "state of nature", with no political authority above them, are in a Prisoners' Dilemma. With no authority to enforce agreements, each person must assume the worse, that other parties will not keep their word. The only rational strategy is not to cooperate. This creates a permanent, if sometimes apprehended, state of war in which each person seeks his own advantage at the expense of others. But even Hobbes seems to admit that conditional cooperation may be rational, albeit precarious, in the state of nature. It is this element of uncertainty which presumably disqualifies it as a solution to the Prisoners' Dilemma. As far as Hobbes is concerned, there is only one solution, and that is the state.

Hume's version of this argument is somewhat more sophisticated, as he is willing to grant that people are sometimes motivated by feelings of benevolence or sympathy, and he takes into account the effects of size and time. Nevertheless, Hume reaches essentially the same conclusion.

Taylor offers a number of criticisms of this justification of the state, but on one significant point he declines to take any real issue. This is the assumption that all agents are rational egoists. Although Taylor devotes an entire chapter to a formal analysis of altruism, he admits that he believes that the assumption of rational egoism "is a good approximation to actual behaviour in very many situations". He also largely dismisses C.B. Macpherson's argument that Hobbes' argument depends on a conception of human nature peculiar to possessive market societies.

So what is wrong with Hobbes' argument? Essentially, Hobbes never considers whether the cure may be worse than the disease. By undermining and destroying local communities, the state renders communitarian alternatives to state control and intervention ineffective. The more the state intervenes in social life, the less likely it is that people will voluntarily cooperate, having been relieved of "the responsibility or need to cooperate with others directly".

In support of this argument Taylor quotes Kropotkin and cites Titmuss' study of blood donorship. In England and Wales, where blood is voluntarily donated, supply has kept up with demand, while in Japan and the United States, where blood is bought and sold, there have been serious shortages. But really this example provides support to Macpherson's linking of the logic of Hobbes' *Leviathan* with capitalism, for it is the reduction of blood to a saleable commodity and not state intervention which appears



to be behind the serious blood shortages in the U.S. and Japan. Taylor himself admits that it is difficult to disentangle the contribution of the state to the decline of community from other causes, "such as the expansion of industrial capitalism".

Not only does the state exacerbate the conditions which are said to provide its justification, it merely displaces the Prisoners' Dilemma from a local or national level to the international level, resulting in permanent "hot" or "cold" wars and never ending arms races.

All of this must of course be taken into account when assessing the desirability of the state. It is here that Taylor does offer some criticisms of the concept of human nature underlying these arguments. Rational choice theory, when used to justify an institution like the state rather than to explain behaviour, is subject to this fatal flaw. The state is said to be necessary and desirable on the basis of certain assumptions regarding individual beliefs and preferences which, far from being fixed, will change over time partly in response to the state itself. Therefore, Taylor concludes, "we cannot deduce from the structure of these preferences that the state is desirable. Indeed, it is not even clear in this case what it means to say that the state is desirable".

Taylor makes the related, and interesting, observation that the assumptions about human nature made by Hobbes and Hume, which are "supposed to characterize human behaviour in the absence of the state", perhaps "more accurately describe what human behaviour would be like immediately after the state has been removed from a society whose members had for a long time lived under states".

In the course of his concluding chapter Taylor also provides a brief comparison of the arguments advanced by Godwin, Wilhelm von Humboldt and John Stuart Mill against state intervention. As Taylor notes, only Godwin took these arguments to their logical conclusion, the abolition of the state itself.

While this is an interesting, even important, book, there is something very unreal about "rational choice theory", even in the capable hands of Professor Taylor. Taylor himself thinks the theory is indispensable for explaining collective behaviour, and in particular, the failure of people to spontaneously resolve collective action problems without the need for an external remedy, such as the state.

But to explain this failure in terms of "rational egoism" is, to my mind, unconvincing and tendentious. It can just as easily be attributed to the feelings of powerlessness that most people experience when confronted by established powers and institutions which, far from solving collective action problems, have created collective action problems of mind boggling proportions, such as the arms race and ecological despoilation.

It is significant that contemporary power structures, despite depending in part on the voluntary obedience of the governed, ultimately maintain their power and domination through force, sometimes of the most brutal kind. To attribute this state of affairs to the "rational egoism" of individuals is just another example of blaming the victim.

What is really disturbing about Taylor's entire enterprise is his attempt to transform anarchism from a libertarian doctrine into an alternative theory of social control. Although Taylor quotes Godwin on the negative effects of coercion, he simply takes for granted that some sort of coercion is necessary in human societies. For him, the only real question is which particular institution will provide it -- the state or the community.

I doubt that many anarchists will find this conception of anarchism very appealing, but it should not be too surprising that this is what happens to anarchism when forced into the Procrustean bed of "rational choice theory", which for the most part is nothing more than an extremely artificial, one-dimensional and transparent rationalization of capitalism, the state and social control, even, it turns out, in the sympathetic hands of Michael Taylor.

**ROBERT GRAHAM**



## BITS AND PIECES

These are bits of stuff culled from my postbag over the past few months.

### BOOK DEALERS

**Philip Walden**, P.O. Box 120, London E8 2PU has brought out another list (number 11) of pamphlets, books and various printed objects from the past and present. A lot are used and some are new.

For that matter, **Nick Spurrier**, 79 Whitstable Road, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8EA has also sent another list of second hand pamphlets and books dealing with all aspects of socialist history. While you are writing to one, may as well knock off a note to the other.

Yet another distributor of written material has just begun trading, specialising in anarchist and anarchist related material. For a full list write to **Ramsay**, 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, Scotland FK8 2RD. From the blurb I got he seems quite keen and is searching out material which might be impossible to get anywhere else. Tends to be a bit more current than some. Lots of periodicals. He would be happy to get in touch if you have something that needs distribution.

**Counter-Productions** have sent yet another list. They seem to be extremely active, and it seems hard to believe that they can actually make a living selling so many of my favourite periodicals. I didn't know anyone was interested. I would not begin to summarize the contents, but suffice it to say they are very current, even though their publications are also historical. You can write to them at P.O. Box 556, London SE5 0RL.

Without wishing to bore you, there is yet another address you might try for "a selection of books, mostly out of print, some very scarce, specialising in freethought, rationalism and secular humanism." **Borg Forder**, 15 Sunninghill Ave, Hangleton, Hove, E. Sussex BN3 8JB. The list I have is number 8.

The last one I will mention this round is **Batbooks Limited**, 41 Eton Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 2UD. The catalog sent me is the first on about History. They seem to serve all sorts of needs if you write with what you want. Their interests are world-wide.

Should any of you be in Athens, write to the **Alternative Gallery Archive** before you go. Its been going since 1982, and is a very useful source of information on things libertarian and alternative. They are mostly postal and by paying a smallish fee, you become a member for life. There is an updated list available. "A.G. Archive", P.O. Box 20037, GR-11810 Athens, Greece.

A pamphlet which is part of a campaign to protest against the unfair dismissal of a **Mr. Tanaka** by the Hitachi company has come my way. Seems he refused overtime work and has been struggling against the big fellows for 22 years or so. Anyone who wishes to find out more should drop me a note

and I will send them the pamphlet.

Richard Alexander of CGH Services, Cwm Gwen Hall, Pencader, Dyfed, Cymru SA39 9HA has sent a press release about his new updated "**SPYBASE**" index. This is now available on 5.25" disks for those having PCs with DOS 2.00 or later. This serious database now covers 40,000 names of groups and individuals in the Intelligence Community, right wing, domestic surveillance, big business and so forth. North American bias, but plenty of European input from such as Lobster. Very up to date. Fairly complex searches can be made on this set of floppy disks, extracting names with something in common. 360K disks only. The programme is Shareware, which means its nearly free, but not quite. Cost £15.00, unless you supply 6 disks, then £10.00. Lobster is responsible for CGH having the disks. They are at 214 Westbourne Avenue, Hull HU5 3JB.

**The Seditonist**, from Incendiary Publications, P.O. Box 210095, San Francisco, California 94121-0095 has come our way. It is a monthly, number 11 is dated July. Eight pages long, A4 format, it carries a number of short articles and reports of activists in the North American arena.

Now and again I get a few bits of post from Chris Tame of the **Libertarian Alliance**. Anyone who has an interest in reviewing this material should be sure to drop me a note.

Mel Most (who wrote it) has sent me a copy of a pamphlet about the **Silk Strike in Paterson, New Jersey** in 1913. It is clearly a work of love, and contains some reprinted articles about that event. It would be an absolute tragedy for this to moulder in my files, so the first person who writes me will get it free. Interested figures might write Most at P.O. Box 614, New York, New York, 10003.

The **Anarchist Book Fair** will take place on 7 October. Careful readers will note that one could pop along to the Fair in the morning and ARG in the afternoon. The New Anarchist Review I have does not say where it is, although a couple years ago it was in a Camden Borough building on Euston Road. Ring Freedom or Housmans where full information will be available.

**On Gogol Boulevard** has also appeared in the post. It seems to be a chronical of various struggles for freedom and choice in both East and West, but mainly focussing on the East. Lots of information about activists. Loose sort of style, the issue I have is a photocopy. \$10.00 will get you four issues from 151 First Avenue #62, New York, New York 10003.

Our Generation writes to say they are nearly ready with a compilation of material from the recent upsurge of **rebellion in China**. They are busily translating material from contacts in Hong Kong and China. They need financial assistance, both for the costs of material and publishing, but also for speaking tours by those who participated. Watch the autumn issue. Anyone interested can order one from me. Or from 3981 boulevard St-Laurent, Suite 444, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 1Y5.

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